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ABSTRACT

This manual describes a program for training extension service employees and states the general policies, requirements and procedures governing the training and development programs for USDA Extension Service staff. The topics covered are: (1) extension service training program--responsibility for training, kinds of training to be carried out; (2) selection of employees for training; (3) authorization of training--authorization by the USDA Office of Personnel, delegation of authorization, variation of work week for educational purposes, limitations, processing approval, agreement to continue in service; (4) contributions and awards--authority to accept, general limitations, prior approval requirements; and (5) records and reports. (KM)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

IN THE

EXTENSION SERVICE - USDA

Extension Service
United States Department of Agriculture

PSD(1)-24(7-72)
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SECTION I - GENERAL PROVISIONS

Purpose of This Manual

It is the purpose of this manual to describe a program for training Extension Service employees and to state the general policies, requirements and procedures that will govern the training and development programs for Extension Service, USDA, staff. It is designed to implement the Government Employees Training Act (P. L. 85-507), enacted July 7, 1958, plus subsequent enactments and amendments, namely P. L. 89-554 (Sept. 6, 1966); P. L. 90-206 (Dec. 16, 1967); U. S. Code Title 5 - Chapter 41; Chapter 410 of the Federal Personnel Manual; and Chapters 272 and 410 of the Department Personnel Manual, P. O. 89-478, (June 29, 1966).

Coverage

All career and career/conditional employees of the Extension Service are included within the scope of these policies, requirements and procedures except those on temporary employment.

Definitions

The term "training and development" means a planned, systematically conducted routine of instruction and practice directed toward definite performance improvement objectives. It does not include staff conferences or meetings, nor the normal instructional process by which a supervisor instructs his subordinates in job performance. The training and development covered by these regulations is that which is done in whole or in part on official time and at government expense.

The meaning of the terms "training through government facilities" and "training through nongovernment facilities" herein conforms with the definitions in Title 5, U. S. Code, Chapter 41, Sections 4101-4118. As defined

therein, these terms mean:

1. Training by, in or through government facilities covers that conducted on property controlled by the government and through the services of any civilian or military personnel of the government.
2. Training through nongovernment facilities is that conducted on property not controlled by the government through the services of neither civilian nor military personnel of the government.

General Policy Governing Training

It is the policy of the Extension Service to provide for training of employees as an integral part of its responsibility for the conduct of its affairs. In order to fulfill their functions adequately, ES personnel need to prepare for the immediate job ahead, for changes in problems and situations as these affect the work to be done, for changes in ES program emphases, for inclusion of new techniques and research findings regarding the educational process and extension educational methodology, and for continuing self-development. Self-training by employees will be supplemented by an organized, continuing program of inservice training provided by the Extension Service. Such training programs will be geared to the mission of the agency and its program requirements. To this end, Extension Administration:

1. Encourages all unit administrators of the Extension Service to recommend to the Administrator policies which will strengthen and improve employee training programs and procedures.
2. Conducts a systematic inventory of training needs, develops and implements training activities to meet these needs, and evaluates the results of training activities.
3. Establishes procedures for the purpose of coordinating staff efforts in planning and conducting staff training and development.

4. Stimulates and encourages staff development, both through individual self-improvement and through agency sponsored activities.
5. Arranges for specific development and training opportunities that enable employees to improve their skills, understandings, and attitudes.

Specific policies relative to assignment of responsibilities, identification of need for training, authorized kinds of training, evaluation and reporting are described in the following pages.

SECTION II - EXTENSION SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM

Responsibility for Training

Each unit administrator will assess the annual and long-term training needs of each of the staff members who serve under him and recommend the types of training best suited to meet these needs. He is responsible for:

1. Providing new employees with a planned orientation training program in individual and group conferences within the unit before they assume the full duties of their respective positions.
2. Recommending annually the types of training needed by unit staff members. These recommendations will be based upon (a) major areas of the current program, (b) shifts which will be required to meet future problems, and (c) areas of training needed to implement program changes. These will be submitted to the Director of Staff Development for consolidation into an annual Extension Service Training Plan for approval by the Administrator.
3. Evaluating the training received and submitting a report on each to the Director of Staff Development for consolidation into an Annual Extension Service Training Report.

The Staff Development unit will give leadership to the development and implementation of training programs for administrative, specialist, secretarial and support staffs of Extension Service. The Director of the unit will:

1. Initiate with ES unit administrators a process for determining training needs.
2. Assist unit administrators in developing recommendations for training needed by each employee in their respective units.
3. Prepare an annual agency training plan to be reviewed by the Administrator.
4. Counsel with ES personnel individually on opportunities for professional improvement.
5. Review applications for training to be sure of compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
6. Give leadership to planning and conducting training for staff members or groups where appropriate.
7. Report to the Administrator annually on ES training activities.
8. Provide information through unit administrators concerning selection and assignment of employees for training, as well as applicable limitations and restrictions on training.

The Extension Service Administrator, based on recommendations of the Associate Administrator and Deputy Administrators, will:

1. Establish a training budget at the beginning of each fiscal year.
2. Make decisions on all aspects of training policies and programs.

3. Set priorities for the types of training to be given.
4. Determine whether a proposed program is in conformity with overall ES policy.

Each employee is encouraged to demonstrate initiative, resourcefulness, and willingness to take advantage of training opportunities offered; to exert effort to develop necessary competencies; and, in consultation with his immediate supervisor, to develop and revise annually a long-term personal training plan. This plan will include self-improvement and self-education activities as well as training activities provided by the agency.

Kinds of Training to be Carried Out

In developing training programs and plans, the unit administrators will give consideration to:

1. Orientation training.
2. Job or production training.
3. Maintenance or refresher training.
4. Career or developmental training.
5. Supervisory and managerial training.
6. Executive development.

Areas of training which are authorized for ES personnel include:

1. Training that will equip an individual to carry out his specialized assignment.
2. Training that will equip an individual to assume broader responsibilities within the Extension Service.

3. Training that will equip an individual to prepare for changes in program emphasis within his specialized assignment.

SECTION III - SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES FOR TRAINING

Factors Considered

Whenever it is determined that training is to be given to some but not all of the employees eligible for consideration, selection methods used shall be based on a consideration of:

1. Extension program emphasis and the priority given to staff preparation in the proposed study area.
2. Future benefits to Extension - prospects of continued service in the Agency or the Department of Agriculture.
3. Clarity of intent or purpose of the study; the extent to which personnel have clearly in mind what the study program will be and the plan for carrying it out.
4. The extent to which the employee's present education and experience need to be supplemented by training in order to improve performance in present assignment or to develop for a more responsible assignment.
5. The employee's potential or capacity for development as indicated by past performance, effects of previous training, and pooled judgment ratings.
6. The employee's interest in and willingness to undertake the training.

SECTION IV - AUTHORIZATION OF TRAINING

Authorization by the USDA Office of Personnel

The following proposals for the training of employees are to be authorized by the Director of Personnel, USDA:

1. In all cases involving contributions or awards or the acceptance of "free training" (except that "free training" made available by manufacturers as a normal service incident to initial purchase or lease and use of their equipment or product).
2. In all cases involving the assignment of employees for training outside the United States.
3. Cases involving nongovernment training for the purpose of filling a position by promotion when required as stated in the Department Personnel Manual (Chapter 410, Subchapter 5-2a; Amendment 106).
4. Programs exceeding an academic year.

In accordance with Department regulations, authorizations for certain outside training will be requested in advance on Form AD-281 from the Director of Personnel, USDA, or his designee. These programs are:

1. The Princeton Mid-Career.
2. Alfred P. Sloan (at M.I.T.).
3. Brookings Research Fellowship.
4. Program for Public Science Policy and Administration (University of New Mexico).
5. Education Program in Management (EPSA).
6. Fellowship in Congressional Operations.
7. Stanford-Sloan.

8. Educational Program in Systems Analysis.

9. The Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

10. The National War College.

Delegation of Authorization

The Administrator of Extension Service or his designee may authorize participation in interagency training activities and in training activities through nongovernment facilities except as noted above in Section IV. Each Assistant Administrator or Deputy Administrator is authorized to approve the requests for training for all personnel who come under his administration, within the framework of the approved training budget and Department regulations. The following training may be authorized:

1. Training by, in or through government facilities

   Participation may be authorized in interagency training activities. The Extension Service thereby agrees to reimburse or share training costs with the Department or Agency offering the course. Other expenses, such as books and transportation within the Washington metropolitan area, will be allowed. Per diem will be authorized when living costs are charged and not included within the tuition costs.

2. Training through nongovernment facilities

   a. Full-time training. Training that is the only assignment of an employee during one or more work days is full-time training. An employee may be in pay or nonpay status.

   b. Continuous study leave exceeding 160 hours. An employee may be approved for full-time study leave. Prior to approval of any full-time training of one semester or more, the unit administrator will counsel with the employee concerning need and

purpose of the training and agency plans for utilizing the employee upon completion of the training. The unit administrator will certify and the Administrator will concur that the study plan is designed to equip the individual either (1) to carry out his specialized assignment, or (2) to assume broader responsibilities in ES or the Department of Agriculture.

A maximum of one year at full salary will be permitted during a 10-year period. The employee may be authorized to use the study leave time in various combinations. Study leave in excess of one year for each 10-year period will be taken as earned annual leave or leave without pay if earned leave is not available.

Individuals who are authorized continuous or full-time study leave outside of the Washington, D. C., metropolitan area in nongovernment facilities will receive transportation costs from their official stations to the training site and return, and per diem while on official travel status. To offset additional expenses while in training, per diem may be authorized in lieu of transportation of immediate family, household goods and personal effects from the employee's official station to the training site and return. The cost of transportation and related services cannot exceed the aggregate per diem which would be paid for the period of training.

Payment of tuition, books, materials, and fees directly related to the full-time training will be authorized.

c. Continuous short-time study leave (9 to 160 hours). Tuition, transportation, per diem and other incidental expenses may be approved for in-residence workshops, short courses or similar activities. Travel and per diem costs for this type of training activity, conducted outside the Washington, D. C., metropolitan area, will be charged to the operating budget of the individual's unit.

d. Continuous study leave taken in daily increments. An individual may be authorized to take study leave in daily increments. Upon approval of the unit administrator and concurrence by the Administrator, the individual may take study leave on a daily basis and receive full salary for the portion of time used until the one-year salary privilege is exhausted. Combinations of time taken which have the approval of the unit administrator and the Administrator may vary. Tuition, books and other related expenses are authorized. Per diem will not be allowed.

e. Training on less than full-time basis. An individual may be authorized to participate in training activities on an hourly basis. The time in training is computed as the number of hours spent in class or with the instructor in the facility. Tuition, books and other related expenses are authorized. Transportation and per diem will not be allowed.

Variation of Work Week for Educational Purposes

Under the provisions of P. L. 89-478, an ES employee may be permitted to vary his work week in order to participate in educational activities.

The unit administrator is authorized to approve plans for variation of the individual's work week for this purpose.

Limitations

Training of an employee by, in or through a nongovernment facility for the purpose of filling a position by promotion is prohibited if there is in the Department of Agriculture another employee of equal ability and suitability who is fully qualified to fill such a position and is available at or within a reasonable distance from the place or places where the duties of such positions are to be performed.

Training solely for the purpose of providing an opportunity for an employee to obtain an academic degree is prohibited. However, agencies are not limited in authorizing training when such training is for the purpose of developing skills, abilities and knowledge which will best qualify a person for the performance of official duties. If, in the accomplishment of this training, the employee receives a degree, this may be considered an incidental by-product of the training.

Time spent by an employee in nongovernment training cannot exceed one year in the first 10-year period of service in government and in each 10-year period of service thereafter. (The one-year-in-ten limitation may be waived under certain conditions.)

Employees must have one or more years of current, continuous civilian government service before having eligibility for training in nongovernment facilities. (This limitation may be waived under certain conditions.)

The number of man-years of training given USDA employees through nongovernment facilities may not exceed one percent of the total man-years of employment appearing in the Department's budget estimates for that fiscal year.

Processing Approval

Authorization for training shall be processed on Form AD-281, individually, and in advance of the training except that only one copy of Form AD-281 with list attached of all trainees involved may be used where a number of employees are to undergo the same training under substantially the same conditions.

The specific procedures to follow in requesting approval of any training activity may be found in "Procedure for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Individual Professional Improvement Programs," available from the Staff Development unit, Program and Staff Development.

Agreement to Continue in Service

All employees scheduled for outside training shall enter into an agreement to continue in the service of the Department for an appropriate period of time after the training, except the following:

1. Those whose training does not exceed 80 hours within a single course or program.
2. Those whose training is provided by manufacturers as a normal service incident to purchase or lease of their equipment or product.
3. Those trained through correspondence courses.
4. Those whose training involves no expense to the government other than their pay.

The employee must enter into the agreement before the training begins. The Administrator will establish the required length of continued service, which is at least three times the period of the training. A copy of the agreement shall be given to the employee.

Trainees who fail to fulfill their agreement shall be required to repay the government the additional expenses incurred as a result of such training unless the Administrator finds that repayment would be against equity, good conscience or the public interest. When an employee transfers to another government agency or a State Extension Service before his service obligation is satisfied, the remainder of the obligation is transferred to the gaining agency.

SECTION V - CONTRIBUTIONS AND AWARDS

Authority to Accept

Contributions and awards may be made to and accepted by employees in connection with nongovernment training, subject to the limitations and requirements of Executive Order 11348 and the Federal Personnel Manual.

General Limitations

Three major limitations on the authority to accept contributions are:

1. The organization which makes the contribution or award must be tax exempt. No awards may be accepted from individuals.
2. The amount of the contribution or award must be determined to be adequate to meet reasonable costs incurred or to be incurred by the recipient incident to the training.
3. It must be determined that the purpose, amount and type of contribution or award will not place or tend to place the recipient under any improper obligation to the grantor.

Prior Approval Requirements

Each case of outside training that involves the acceptance of a contribution or award or the acceptance of "free training" (that made available

without charge to all those meeting the eligibility requirements) shall be submitted to the Administrator for prior approval on Form AD-281. Acceptance of a contribution or award is conditional on an appropriate reduction of government payment for the training. Records of the grant must be kept.

SECTION VI - RECORDS AND REPORTS

For evaluation purposes and to insure compliance with the law, the Staff Development unit will maintain a permanent file of training received at government expense by each ES employee.

With the assistance of unit administrators the Director of Staff Development will consolidate unit records into the annual ES training report. Shortly after the end of the fiscal year, but not later than August 1, the Director of Staff Development will submit this report to the Administrator, as required by law and regulations.

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